

Dead Until Dark Study Guide

Dead Until Dark by Charlaine Harris

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Plot Summary

Sookie Stackhouse is a waitress in rural Louisiana in search of something more. Though happy, Sookie is different from everyone else because she is a telepath. The concentration that it takes for Sookie to maintain daily life and not read the minds of those around her is intense, and as a result sometimes people around her think she is crazy. Sookie deals with this as best she can, but longs for the day when she doesn't feel so isolated.

A vampire arrives in Merlotte's, the bar where Sookie works, and changes her life. Fascinated by the possibilities, Sookie is thrilled to have a vampire in Bon Temps, her home town. Events require Sookie to save the vampire from people looking to profit from the sale of his blood, and Sookie comes to the rescue, saving Bill the vampire from the clutches of the Rattrays, Mack and Denise. Realizing she is unable to hear his thoughts, Sookie is thrilled for more than one reason to have met the attractive vampire.

As daily life continues, women are being murdered in Bon Temps, and they have ties to vampires. Some of the people in town wonder if Bill has anything to do with their deaths, but Sookie is sure of his innocence. As she spends more time with Bill and gets to know more about him, Sookie understands that Bill is tired of moving from place to place and wants nothing more than to settle in one place and make a home. Sookie's brother Jason is also a suspect in the murders, having been sexually involved with both suspects at one time or another.

Sookie becomes involved in Bill's life and meets other vampires, undead that sometimes make her question her attraction to Bill. Sookie's boss, Sam, also plays an important role in her life, admitting finally that he is attracted to Sookie, though in her opinion, he admits it too late. Sookie senses that there is something unusual about Sam, but is not sure what it could be. His thoughts are not clear to her like other people's; she can only sense his feelings.

Sookie's grandmother is killed and it becomes evident that the murderer is targeting people that are involved with vampires. Sookie had been the intended victim, but the killer had surprised Gran home alone. Sookie is more determined than ever to find the killer and clear the name of Bill Compton, as well as that of her brother.

Sookie decides to use her ability to hear others thoughts to find information about the killer. Her talent is called into use by Eric, a vampire at a bar in Shreveport, as well. Sookie realizes that the ability is not a disability as she had once thought. The waitress learns many things about the people around her, including the quality of the thoughts they have as well. Danger builds and Bill provides Sookie with a guard, a certain Memphis musician that had died many years ago, or at least most people believed.

Events come to a head and Sookie is alone; her bodyguard disabled by a drugged animal left as bait. Reaching out Sookie can only sense the thoughts of the person intent on killing her, the dark hate radiating toward her so deeply she can almost touch



it. Sookie flees, trying to escape and is stunned to find that the killer is Rene Lenier, a family friend and former husband of her co-worker, Arlene. Rene's sister had been involved with a vampire and Rene had killed her as well. Now the man was determined to kill any woman that would consider a relationship with a vampire. Sookie manages to escape, injuring Rene and leaving him in the cemetery near her house. The man is arrested, after confessing to the police.

Sookie recovers from her battle for her life with Rene and is visited by Bill in the hospital. Bill had been in New Orleans, and had been elected the Fifth Area Investigator. Vampires were more organized than Sookie had realized. Bill had done this because he wanted to keep Sookie safe from Eric, who had shown more interest in her than Sookie or Bill liked. The fact that Bill now worked for what amounted to the vampire government might help.

The novel closes with Bill telling Sookie that their life can now get back to normal, and Sookie wondering what normal could possibly be.



Chapter One

Chapter One Summary

Sookie Stackhouse is a waitress at the local bar in Bon Temps, Louisiana, waiting for something to happen in her life. A little excitement turns into a lot more when a vampire moves into town. People in town are getting murdered, and it's up to Sookie to defend Bill Compton, her friend the vampire.

Sookie Stackhouse is a 25-year-old waitress in Bon Temps, Louisiana. Working at the local bar, Sookie has friends, but not many, as most people consider her a bit crazy. Sookie accepts the way people treat her because she is a bit different. Sookie is able to read the thoughts of the people around her, and years of trying to stay out of people's business have made her actions seem strange to others.

A typical night becomes something special when a vampire sits at one of Sookie's tables. Vampires had been legally recognized a few years back; however, Sookie had never met one. Excited, Sookie serves the man, but her happiness is dimmed by the rude comments of the couple at the next table, the Rattrays. Sookie goes about her business, distressed to see that the Rattrays have joined the vampire at his table and that Denise Rattray is flirting outrageously with the man. Keeping an eye on things as she works, Sookie sees the vampire leaving with the Rattrays and listens to the couple's thoughts as they leave. Stunned, Sookie realizes that they plan to drain the vampire and sell his blood. Reacting without much planning, Sookie leaves and retrieves a chain from her brother's truck. Approaching without notice, Sookie attacks the Rattrays, foiling their plans. The couple leaves angrily, vowing revenge, and Sookie removes the silver chains the couple had used to bind the vampire. As the vampire recovers he questions whether Sookie is frightened of him. Sookie is amazed to realize that she can not hear the vampire's thoughts. Touching his face and concentrating does nothing to bring his thoughts into focus. The silence is an awesome relief. The vampire introduces himself as Bill and asks Sookie what she is. Replying that she is a waitress, Sookie returns to work.

That night after work, Sookie discusses meeting the vampire with her grandmother, Adele Hale Stackhouse. Sookie has lived with her grandmother in the family home since her parents died in a flash flood when she was seven. Gran is as excited about a vampire in Bon Temps as Sookie is, as both women like new things. Gran wonders if the vampire would speak to her group, The Descendants of the Glorious Dead, and Sookie promises to ask him the next time she sees him.

The following day, Jason Stackhouse, Sookie's brother arrives, angry about Sookie's altercation with the Rattrays. Sookie tells Jason that the Rattrays had been draining the vampire and that Mack had come after her with a knife. Jason calms down somewhat, and the two join Gran for lunch. Jason tells the two women that Maudette Pickens, a girl Sookie had gone to school with had been murdered the night before. Sookie and Gran



are stunned, especially when Jason tells them that Maudette was strangled but had vampire bites on her thighs. It seems that Maudette had been a regular at the vampire bar in Shreveport. Sookie is surprised to find out that Maudette was a fang-banger, or person who liked being bitten by vampires. The two women express concern that Jason might be considered a suspect in Maudette's death, as he has been known to sleep with her when no one else was available.

At work, Sookie is not happy to find out that Rene Lenier, a friend of Jason's had told Sam about her run in with the Rattrays. Sam is angry, and Sookie is upset, not just because he never gets angry with her, but because she can sense his desire for her. She can not however, read his thoughts like most people, and that is odd. When the vampire returns, Sookie asks Bill to meet her when she gets off work. He agrees, and at closing time, Sookie exits to stand alone in the parking lot. Disappointed that Bill is not there, Sookie is surprised when Mack and Denise Rattray ambush her and beat her badly. Sookie realizes they intend to kill her, but the sound of a dog growling startles the couple, and as Sookie lies in a haze on the ground she hears screaming. Bill kneels in front of her and gingerly picks her up and carries her into the woods. The vampire grunts and then tells Sookie to drink. Before she realizes what she is doing, Sookie is drinking the vampire's blood. Passing out, Sookie awakens shortly afterward and feels better. The arm she that had been broken was healed. Bill's blood had caused her to recover very quickly. Babbling, Sookie tells Bill that she is a telepath, and the reason she likes him is because she can not hear his thoughts. Before leaving, Sookie asks Bill if he would speak to her grandmother's group, and Bill agrees because it will make Sookie happy. Sookie turns to ask Bill about the dog, but the vampire is gone.

Chapter One Analysis

Several important characters and facts are introduced in the first chapter of *Dead Until Dark*. The main character is Sookie Stackhouse, a young waitress in Bon Temps, Louisiana. Sookie is an attractive young woman, but she does not have much of a social life due to what she considers her disability. Sookie is a telepath, able to read the thoughts of those around her. Because Sookie has to concentrate very hard not to hear people's thoughts, the people of Bon Temps sometimes think she is crazy, as she tends to walk around with a smile plastered on, and tends to come across as a bit ditzy.

Touching someone increases the transmission of their thoughts, and because of this Sookie does not have very many close relationships, especially of a sexual nature. The thoughts that would flood her mind during sex would be too difficult to control.

The vampire, Bill, will become very important to Sookie for many reasons. Sookie is intrigued by meeting a vampire at all, to begin with. Vampires were legally recognized as citizens two years previously, though they were not considered the undead. The popular train of thought was that vampires had a virus that made them appear dead. The fact that Sookie can not hear Bill's thoughts is a reprieve for Sookie. Unable to ever let her guard down around others, Sookie is able to relax and be herself with Bill.



The idea of draining a vampire's blood is introduced when the Rattray's attempt to drain Bill. Vampire blood is an expensive item on the black market, with side effects of enhanced libido and healing powers. Though Sookie is not in need of an enhanced libido, the healing effects of vampire blood are proven when she drinks Bill's blood after the attack by the Rattrays. Broken bones and internal injuries healed in a very short period of time.

Sookie feels an attraction to Bill, but is unsure of herself. She is aware that he is a vampire, but the thought of being near someone and not having to worry about hearing their thoughts is very attractive.

The attack by the Rattray's, which results in their deaths, does scare Sookie, but she is not as horrified as she thinks she should be. In her opinion they were going to kill her, so they deserved what they got. The dog that Sookie heard the night of the attack will also return later in the novel, revealing an important piece of information. The murder of Maudette Pickens will be a central plot in the novel, as Sookie is torn between wondering if Bill might be involved and trying to prove him innocent.

Several other characters of importance are also introduced, such as Gran, Sookie's grandmother, Sam, Sookie's boss, Jason, her brother, and Rene, a local man that is friends with Sookie's brother and dating Arlene, another waitress at Merlotte's. Rene had been married to Arlene at one point, and the two seemed to have resumed dating.



Chapter Two

Chapter Two Summary

The following morning, Gran receives a phone call from a friend telling her about a tornado that touched down at Four Tracks Corner, destroying the Rattray's trailer and killing the couple. Sookie knows no tornado is responsible for their death. Gran is thrilled that Bill will be coming over to meet with her and discuss speaking to her group. Adele plans to spend the next day cleaning the house.

On the way to work Sookie stops by the site of the Rattray's home and is stunned by the amount of destruction. Mike Spencer the town Medical Examiner is at the scene, as well as the sheriff, Bud Dearborn. Dearborn asks Sookie about the fight she had with the Rattray's earlier in the week, and Sookie is a bit defensive. She explains that the couple was draining a vampire, and she had defended the vampire. Dearborn comments that Bill now lives in the old Compton house and Sookie is able to hide her surprise. The Compton house is very close to her own home.

At work, the bar is buzzing with news of the Rattray's deaths. A patron touches Sookie inappropriately and Rene Lenier defends her and tells the man to leave. Though Sookie is grateful, she tells Rene that he should have let her handle the matter. Rene tells Sookie that she reminds him of his sister, Cindy, who had moved to Baton Rouge a few years ago.

The following day Sookie helps Gran clean the house and is pleased when Bill arrives. The vampire spends some time with Gran, discussing the Bon Temps of days gone by and his knowledge of her relatives. Afterward, Sookie and Bill go for a walk and discuss their lives; his as a vampire, and hers as a telepath and the difficulties that both have experienced. Sookie offers to help Bill find contractors that will work on his home, and the two part company, with Sookie giving Bill a kiss on the cheek.

Called into work the following night because Dawn, a waitress, did not come in, Sookie upsets Arlene by reading her thoughts. Sam finds Sookie alone and upset and offers her compassion as well as an invitation to read his thoughts. Sookie is surprised but leery, as she has sensed Sam's attraction to her.

That evening Sookie arrives at Bill's house with some information for him and is surprised when the door is opened by a female vampire. Diane, an attractive woman, is there with two male vampires, Liam and Malcolm, and their two human companions. The vampires goad Sookie, trying to scare her, until Bill declares Sookie is his. Though startled, Sookie wisely stays silent. The vampires offer Bill the blood of Jerry, Malcolm's human, but as Bill is about to drink from him, Sookie warns him that Jerry carries the Sino-Aids virus. Jerry attacks Sookie, and Bill easily breaks the man's wrist so that he releases Sookie. The vampires leave, taking Jerry, and Sookie faints, overwhelmed by the events of the evening. When she wakes, Bill tells her that when vampires nest



together as Diane, Malcolm and Liam do, they can grow to be very cruel. Sookie leaves, refusing a kiss from Bill, very upset by the things she has seen and learned.

Chapter Two Analysis

The destruction of the Rattray's trailer stuns Sookie. She is aware that vampires are supposed to be strong; however, the trees uprooted and the car tossed like it weighed an ounce remind her that Bill is not human, and she needs to be cautious. The sheriff questions her about her fight with the Rattray's and Sookie gets defensive, knowing that people in town think she is odd already—being friends with a vampire just adds to the persona.

Spending time with Bill and Gran is calming for Sookie, and she is pleased that the two get along so well. Gran is pleasantly surprised that Bill had grown up in the area and knew her relatives and something of the life they had led. Walking with Bill afterward, Sookie is happy, pleased that she can relax near Bill. She is surprised when Bill tells her he is happy as well because he can be himself with her. The two discuss their lives, Bill telling Sookie that he had been married, and a bit about his family, including the fact that he had a sister. Sookie tells Bill how difficult it was for her growing up being a telepath. Bill tells Sookie that she has a gift, but she does not see it that way.

Sookie is called into work the following evening because Dawn has not shown up for work. This fact will become more significant as the story moves on. After upsetting Arlene, Sookie is confronted by Sam, wondering if she is alright. Though Sookie does not talk about her abilities often, she is comforted by Sam's apparent understanding of her situation and the difficulties she faces. Sookie explains that many people think she is crazy because between the work it takes to keep her defenses up, and taking drink orders, she doesn't have a lot of brain power left to carry on a conversation. Sam is kind, and tells Sookie to try and see what he is thinking. Sookie is stunned to be invited into his thoughts. No one had ever suggested such a thing to her before.

After work, Sookie drives to Bill's house and is surprised to find he has company. The vampire that greets her at the door frightens her, and Sookie is worried about Bill. Unsure if Bill is alright, Sookie enters the house and finds two more vampires and their human companions. Judging by Bill's reaction, Sookie gathers that he is not at all pleased by his visitors, either. The vampires do their best to frighten Sookie, specifically the woman named Diane. Bill declares Sookie his, and though she is stunned, Sookie is also oddly comforted. When Diane encourages Bill to drink from Jerry, Sookie is startled to see the way Bill reacts to the man, almost enthralled by the transformation. Suddenly aware of Jerry's thoughts, Sookie warns Bill of the virus, and the other vampires react. Jerry attacks Sookie, who is overwhelmed by the thoughts that pour out of the man. Again Bill demonstrates his strength by snapping Jerry's wrist, but just as quickly his gentleness by stroking Sookie's throat. The three vampires leave, taking Jerry, and Sookie knows that they are going to kill Jerry. Upset by the events of the evening, Sookie leaves, unsure if she can balance her feelings for Bill with the discovery of the true nature of some vampires.



Chapter Three

Chapter Three Summary

Sookie is awakened by a phone call from Sam asking her to stop by Dawn's house and see why she has not come to work for two days. Unhappy about the chore, Sookie dresses and heads to Dawn's house. Outside, Sookie notices that the pine pollen on the porch has not been disturbed. Rene Lenier calls from across the street, wondering if Sookie needs help and seems angry that Sam did not come and check on Dawn himself. Sookie walks to the back of the house and looks in the bedroom window to see Dawn's body sprawled on the bed. Telling Rene to call the police and then Sam, Sookie stands outside the window, unwilling to look in again.

Dawn's neighbor, JB du Rone appears at his window and joins Sookie outside. JB had gone to school with Sookie and the two had dated briefly. JB tells Sookie that Dawn liked sex rough, and Sookie is more disturbed than she thought she could be. Officers Kenya Jones and Kevin Prior arrive and ask Sookie what the story is. Unwilling to deal with her own thoughts any longer, Sookie relaxes and listens to those around her. Sookie finds out that both Kevin Prior and Rene had had sex with Dawn, as had JB, but JB had been unable to abuse Dawn in the way she liked. Sam arrives and Sookie reaches out with her mind to him. Not only is Sookie unable to read his thoughts, but she senses Sam actually closing his mind to her. This is a new experience for Sookie. Detective Andy Bellefleur arrives and questions Sookie, suggesting that she come to the station later to go over things again. The detective is a bit condescending and Sookie calls him on it, embarrassing him. When Bellefleur's mind wanders to the thoughts of working somewhere else, Sookie makes the mistake of responding to him, and Bellefleur is amazed that the rumors about Sookie's abilities are true.

At work the bar is full of people that had heard about Dawn and wanted information. Terry Bellefleur is working in Sam's place, as he is still with the police. Sookie discusses things with Terry, who automatically connects Dawn's death with Maudette's in his mind, and Sookie agrees. It is possible that the two women were killed by the same person. Sam arrives and tells Sookie that Dawn did have vampire bites like Maudette and reminds her that though Bill is a nice person, he is not human. Sookie surprises Sam by telling Sam that he (Sam) isn't either.

That evening after work, Sookie arrives home to find Bill waiting for her. Sookie tells Bill of Dawn's murder and is relieved when he is unaware of which girl from the bar Sookie is describing. Bill surprises her further by telling her that Dawn had come to his house one night, very confidently. The two discuss the deaths of the women and decide that a vampire would not have strangled them and "wasted" the blood of the victims. Sookie thinks the killer is someone who is determined to kill women who have been with vampires. Believing the best place to start is the vampire bar in Shreveport, Sookie asks Bill to take her there so that she can find out if Dawn as well as Maudette had been there. Bill agrees to do so, and Sookie bids him goodnight.



Chapter Three Analysis

The death of Dawn Green stuns Sookie and worries her as well. Two murders in the small town of Bon Temps are a bit overwhelming. The thought that her brother had known both women does not escape her.

At Dawn's house Sookie finds Rene, willing to help, but angry at Sam for having Sookie check on the other waitress. Sookie does not think anything strange about this, but it is a significant fact. When things become too much for Sookie to concentrate on she lets down her guard and gathers some useful information at the scene. KB du Rone, Kevin Prior and Rene Lenier had all slept with Dawn at one point or another. Sookie also discovers that Rene's thoughts are dark and confusing, and very hard to grasp clearly.

When Sam arrives and Sookie tries to see his thoughts, she is surprised by his ability to shut her out. This is something Sookie has never experienced before, leading her to wonder exactly what is different about Sam. The only other time that Sookie had not been able to hear someone's thoughts was with vampires.

Detective Bellefleur is condescending, leading Sookie to defend her job and her life, embarrassing the detective. Bellefleur thinks that working in a different town where no one knows him would be better for him, and Sookie tells him he simply needs to stop being judgmental. Realizing that she should not have let Bellefleur know about her ability, Sookie tries to cover things up, but it is too late. The detective will try and gather more information from Sookie at a later time.

At work, Sookie is angry when Sam suggests she might want to be careful about Bill as he is not human. Sookie responds that Sam isn't either, startling him. Sookie is unsure of what Sam is, but she is sure he is as different as she and Bill are.

At home, Sookie is relieved that Bill did not know Dawn but surprised when Bill tells her that Dawn had come to his house the night the other vampires had been there. Sookie is angry when Bill tries to explain that he might not have protected Dawn. Bill reminds her that he is not human any longer, and does not react in normal human ways. The two discuss the murders and Sookie's insight about the murderer targeting women that have been with vampires is reasonable. Bill agrees to take Sookie to the vampire bar to help her find the truth.



Chapter Four

Chapter Four Summary

Sookie gets ready for her date with Bill and heads to work to collect her paycheck. Her dress causes a bit of a stir among the patrons and Sam calls her into the office. Sookie is surprised and intrigued when Sam leans over and smells her before she leaves.

At home, Bill is waiting and her outfit causes quite a different reaction with him. In the car Sookie apologizes for not being dressed appropriately, but Bill tells her that he simply doubts whether he can protect her at the bar. At Fantasia, the Shreveport vampire bar, Sookie is amazed by the people and vampires she sees. Showing pictures of Maudette and Dawn to the bartender Longshadow, the vampire confirms that both women had been in but refuses to say who they had been with. Showing him a picture of her brother, Sookie is relieved to find that Jason had not been to the bar. Several fang bangers approach Bill and though he turns them away, Sookie grows more annoyed by the minute. Bill does not understand why, and Sookie explains that every time she and Bill do anything it is at her suggestion. Bill asks if she still wants his help and Sookie says she does.

The couple approaches a blond vampire who is with a female vampire and who are sitting and watching the goings on in the bar. Eric and Pam are older than Bill by centuries according to Bill. Eric and Pam tell Sookie that they have both seen Maudette and Dawn in the bar. Eric questions Bill's relationship to Sookie and he again declares Sookie his. Sitting at their table Sookie can sense Eric trying to glamour her, a vampire term for hypnotize. Bill is not happy about this, because it breaks an unwritten rule of their kind.

Sookie reads the minds of the patrons around her, declaring that all those present are thinking about sex. Suddenly she reads the thoughts of an undercover police officer and tells Bill that there is going to be a raid, as a vampire is in the bathroom feeding on a human. Bill signals Eric and Pam and they all leave the bar. Eric wants to know how Bill knows that there is going to be a raid and Sookie tells him the truth. Eric is intrigued. Bill and Sookie leave the parking lot as the police pull in and drive away. Several blocks away Bill pulls over and drags Sookie to him, kissing her deeply. Before things can go further a police officer knocks on the window and warns them that the bar had been raided and they should be more careful and move along. The two drive back to Sookie's house, and Sookie is saddened when Bill does not want to kiss her again. She apologizes for asking Bill to take her out and promises that it will not happen again. Bill declares her naïve, and Sookie tells him that she will not ask him out again and closes the door before he can respond.



Chapter Four Analysis

Sookie is confounded by Sam's reaction to her outfit at the bar and stunned when he smells her deeply before she leaves. Sookie is more certain than ever that there is something not quite human about Sam. Bill's reaction to her outfit upsets Sookie at first, until he explains he is concerned for her safety at Fantasia. Sookie thinks Bill is being sarcastic, but realizes that Bill is not, making Sookie a bit more apprehensive.

At the bar, Sookie is amazed by the different people and vampires in attendance. The fang bangers that approach Bill are very upsetting to her and she is even more upset by Bill's lack of understanding at her reaction. To Sookie, the fact that every time she has seen Bill it has been because she instigated the meeting is beginning to bother her. She is attracted to him and is very unsure of herself when it comes to him. Bill declaring Sookie as his to Eric is a bit reassuring, but Sookie is not sure if he means it or if he is simply protecting her.

The raid at the bar creates a bit of a problem for Sookie. Unwilling to allow the others to be caught by the police, Sookie reveals her ability to Eric, and Eric will call on her again because of it. Driving home Sookie is stunned by Bill's kiss and pleased that he has finally shown some emotion when it comes to her. The kiss very well could have become more had the police officer not interrupted, something that Sookie is unsure would have been a good thing or a bad thing. Arriving at her house, Bill is once again aloof, and Sookie is disgusted and hurt. Tired of trying to figure out what he wants from her, Sookie tells Bill that she will not call him again. Ironically, the fact that Sookie can not read his thoughts has become a stumbling block. Though Sookie had been thrilled that he was blank to her, the fact that she has no sense of what he is thinking has become somewhat frustrating.



Chapter Five

Chapter Five Summary

The bar stays busy and keeps Sookie occupied, helping keep her mind off Bill. Andy Bellefleur starts coming in frequently and would think provocative thoughts in order to catch Sookie off guard. Though she had lots of practice not reacting, things became too much for her and Sookie went to the store room in tears when she caught Andy thinking about her having sex with her brother. Sam checks on Sookie and becomes very angry when she tells him what Andy has been doing. Bellefleur apologizes to Sookie, and Sam tells him to sit in someone else's section if he comes back to the bar. Recovered from the ordeal with the detective, Sookie is pleasantly surprised when Sam asks her out, to the meeting of the Descendants of the Glorious Dead that Bill will be speaking at, and then for coffee. Sookie accepts, pleased to have something to keep her occupied.

Sam picks Sookie up for the night and they head to the meeting. Bill arrives and seems a bit surprised to see Sookie with Sam. Bill speaks to the group about the ravages of the civil war, thrilling some present with first hand accounts of their relatives that he had known. After the meeting those present all wanted to speak to Bill, and Sookie and Sam left quietly to go get coffee. Sam questions Sookie about her relationship with Bill, and Sookie is hard pressed to explain how she feels, or if there is a relationship at all. Sam stuns her when he reveals that he cares for her, as a friend and maybe more. Sookie asks why he had to wait until someone else showed interest in her before he revealed his feelings.

Sam drives Sookie home and she enters the house calling to Gran. Things seem normal, but there is a smell in the air and Sookie realizes it is blood she smells. Rushing to the kitchen and begins screaming. Bill appears and calms her. The two call the police and Andy Bellefleur arrives. Jason also arrives when Sookie is able to reach him, as well as Sam. Sookie tells Jason that Gran has been murdered and he breaks down, the two of the realizing that they are all they have left. Sookie tells Jason how she discovered Gran and blames herself. Jason stuns Sookie by telling her that Gran had left her the house and all the property, becoming angry. Sookie is unsure of why he is so upset and Bill comforts her.

Bellefleur wants to speak to Bill and Sookie gets angry, telling Bill that she is worried he would be suspected because he is a vampire. The two walk outside and Bill calms her down, telling her that Andy will figure it out. On the way back to the house, Jason slaps Sookie, knocking her to the ground. Bill leaps in front of her to protect her and Andy settles Jason down.

The funeral is large and afterward everyone goes back to the house that now belongs to Sookie. Jason is calm but quiet. People are surprised that Sookie is willing to stay in the house, but she explains that her memories of her life there are more happy than not. A woman brings up the fact that Gran's brother had not been at the funeral, and though



Sookie has no desire to see her uncle Bartlett, she tells Jason that he can call him if he wants.

Chapter Five Analysis

Sookie tries to keep herself occupied and her thoughts away from Bill. Working helps and she continues to do her best until Andy Bellefleur begins to toy with her ability. Unsure of why Andy is trying to provoke her, Sookie ignores him as long as she can, finally breaking down at the disgusting thoughts she reads from him. Sam is very upset for Sookie, and the detective seems truly sorry about the way he behaved. Andy does not seem to know why he has been provoking Sookie either, except that he is fascinated by her abilities.

Sookie is pleased Sam has asked her out, though unsure why he has. An excuse to see Bill has arisen and Sookie looks forward to the evening for two reasons. At the meeting Sookie is aware of Bill, and he seems to be surprised that Sookie is out with another man, especially her boss. The meeting goes well, and Sookie, as well as the others at the lecture, is fascinated by the tales of the civil war told by a survivor. Afterward, Sookie does not want to risk running into Bill and she and Sam leave for coffee.

Talking with Sam, Sookie is surprised by his concern over her relationship with Bill and Sookie is honestly confused why he would care so much. When Sam reveals that he cares for Sookie, she is stunned and flattered, and a bit angry that Sam had waited until Bill had shown interest in her before admitting his feelings. Sam knows he had been wrong for doing so, and they end the evening.

Discovering her grandmother murdered, Sookie is understandably upset. Bill heard her scream as he arrived back at her home to wait for her to return from her date with Sam. Calming her, the police are called as well as Jason and Sam. Jason is as upset as Sookie, more so because his grandmother can not now change her will and give him half of the property. Sookie believes her grandmother was killed because of her. Bill agrees; whoever had killed Maudette and Dawn had come to the house to kill Sookie, expecting to find her home alone. Finding her grandmother instead, the perpetrator had killed her in order to remain undiscovered. At the funeral Jason is calmer and stands with Sookie, and the two of them greet the people who had come to mourn the death of their grandmother. A woman mentions Gran's brother, and though Sookie is unwilling to speak to Bartlett, she tells Jason he may call him if he wishes. Sookie's uncle will come up again later, and her reluctance to speak to him will be revealed.



Chapter Six

Chapter Six Summary

Sookie takes three days off from work and gets things in order along with Arlene's help. Deciding to move into her grandmother's room, Sookie feels better as the day goes on. Arlene leaves and Sookie takes a shower, washing away the grime of the day. Bill arrives and Sookie invites him in. Bill offers to comb out her hair and Sookie allows him to do so. While he works, Bill tells her about his family, his sister and brother, as well as his wife and children. Sookie is upset to think of all the pain Bill must have felt losing those he loved. Bill takes Sookie in his arms and the two kiss, and Bill carries her to bed. Excited and scared, Sookie responds enthusiastically, stopping only when Bill realizes she is a virgin. Urging him to continue, Bill does, and the two continue to make love. As Sookie reaches climax; Bill does as well, and Sookie encourages him to bite her, and feels him drawing blood from her. Afterward, Bill uses his own blood to soothe Sookie, and the two make love again.

At work Sookie runs into her brother who is upset that he keeps getting called into the police station and getting questioned about the murders. Sookie suggests a lawyer, and Jason agrees. Arlene notices that Sookie seems to be happier and asks if she has been 'having fun.' Sookie tells her she has been with Bill and at first Arlene is confused, not thinking Sookie means Bill the vampire. The people she works with are stunned at first, but recover quickly, until Sam moves the collar of her shirt to reveal the bite mark on her neck. Sookie is angry and tells Sam so.

That evening Bill comes to the bar and Sookie is happy to see him and they make plans to meet later. The evening is disrupted by the arrival of Malcolm and Diane at Merlotte's. The pair teases Bill and startles some of the patrons. Malcolm becomes very serious, telling Bill that he has heard about the trip to Fangtasia. Reminding Bill that what the vampires do is no one's business, Malcolm taunts Bill about his desire to be with humans. Sookie stomps on Malcolm's instep, breaking his concentration, and the pair leave. At Bill's house the vampire shows her the work that has been accomplished since her last visit. Filled with desire for Bill, Sookie can not help being somewhat embarrassed when he suggests they bathe together. Bill reassures her, and the two once again succumb to passion, Sookie quickly losing her inhibitions and bathing the vampire in a large sunken tub.

Chapter Six Analysis

Sookie moves on as best she can after the murder of her grandmother, keeping herself busy cleaning the house and packing her grandmother's things away. She decides to move into Gran's room, explaining to Arlene that it would be more difficult to sleep in her own room and think about Gran's room being empty. Arlene is understanding, and helps her to move things.



Bill's arrival is a surprise, and though Sookie is happy to see him, she is obviously subdued. Bill combs her hair, soothing her, and tells her about his life, distracting her from her own situation. The pain that Sookie feels for Bill is as deep as her own. The fact that Bill had lost so many people he cared for had never really occurred to her. The two kiss, comforting each other, and things escalate quickly, the sexual attraction that the two have been feeling becoming more evident. Sookie realizes that Bill does desire her, and she is relieved. Bill discovers that Sookie is a virgin, and does not wish to hurt her, but Sookie urges him to continue. As they climax Sookie offers her blood to Bill, giving herself to him completely.

Sookie's personality changes enough to be noticeable to those she works with. Pleased that she has finally found someone to date, her friends are taken aback when they realize that Sookie is in a relationship with a vampire. Sam angers Sookie when he reveals the bite mark on her neck and even angrier when he tells her he is worried for her. Sookie tells him he is jealous and nothing more. Sookie is right; Sam is jealous, but he is concerned for her as well.

Jason is becoming a focus of the police department because of his relationship with the murder victims, though Sookie can not understand why anyone would consider him involved after the murder of Gran. Sookie is relieved that Jason is no longer angry with her and suggests he hire a lawyer, and Jason reveals that Rene had suggested the same thing. Sookie is pleased that she and Rene agree and are both looking out for Jason. The Monroe vampires arrive at Merlot's and makes a scene, and Sookie is worried they will damage the relationship that Bill has started to build with the townspeople. It does not seem the people that know Bill are blaming him for the outrageous behavior of Malcolm and Diane, and Sookie is relieved.

Sookie and Bill continue to spend time together, making love and sharing whatever time they can together. As Bill can not come out in daylight, and Sookie is human, at some point the schedule they keep will affect Sookie.



Chapter Seven

Chapter Seven Summary

One night Bill and Sookie lie in bed talking about their lives, and Sookie reveals that her uncle had molested her when she was a young girl. Bill questions her, and Sookie tells the truth. As a young girl she had told her parents, but they had not believed her, so it fell to Sookie to protect herself by avoiding being alone with the man. After her parents died, Sookie told her grandmother as well and was relieved when Gran banned her brother from her home, refusing to see him again.

The next day, Sookie is greeted by her brother, who while not pleased that Sookie is dating a vampire, surprises her by not being judgmental about it. Another shock is revealed when Jason tells Sookie that Uncle Bartlett had been killed the night before by a burglar that had thrown him down the stairs. Jason is not happy when Sookie does not express any remorse at the man's death. It is not until later that Sookie makes the connection; Bill had her uncle killed.

That evening Sookie tells Bill that though she knows he meant well, he can not alter the path of her life. It would be difficult to worry about those around her if Bill were going to kill anyone that upset her. Sookie suggests they separate for a while to see if the love they feel for one another is worth the pain that it might cause.

The next few days pass and Sookie becomes aware of a wave of anger in the bar from the patrons. The Monroe vampires, Malcolm, Diane and Liam, have been touring the area, making trouble and acting outrageous. The men in the bar are contemplating burning the home they rent to the ground. Bill arrives with a young man, Harlan, who is traveling to New Orleans. Sookie is jealous, but when Bill mentions that Harlan wants to visit with Malcolm, Sookie tries to warn the two vampires about the thoughts of the men in the bar. She is ineffective and is awakened the next day by a phone call from Jason, telling her that the Monroe vampires had been burned out the night before.

Sookie rushes to the scene and finds four coffins in the sun, the contents unrecognizable. Sam arrives and tries to calm her, but Sookie does not know how she can get through the day waiting to see if Bill is alive or not. Sam takes her home and together they clean her house, Sam encouraging her to keep her mind occupied. He leaves at night, and Sookie rushes to the cemetery, calling out for Bill. He rises from the ground and Sookie is relieved to find him unharmed. Telling Bill what happened while he slept, Bill becomes angry and makes love to her violently. Afterwards, he tries to make Sookie promise that if anything were to happen to him she would go to Sam. Bill asks if Sookie can hear Sam's thoughts, and Sookie admits that she can not. The two make love again, and Sookie is once again happy to be with Bill.



Chapter Seven Analysis

The knowledge that Sookie had been molested by her uncle explains her reluctance to notify him of Gran's death when Jason had brought it up. Bill's interest in the subject seems to be that of a caring boyfriend until Sookie finds out that Bartlett had been killed that evening. Though she does not mourn the loss of the man, Sookie is concerned that every time she gets into a fight with someone, Bill might have the person killed. Trying to explain this to Bill is difficult, as he tells Sookie he loves her and simply wants to protect her. Realizing that there are differences between them that are much greater than being a human/vampire couple, Sookie suggests that they take a break from each other to see if the relationship is worth the effort.

Sookie does well keeping herself busy, until the thoughts of the patrons in the bar intrude. The knowledge that they are planning to burn the home of the Monroe vampires is startling. Though Sookie does not care for the group at all, it would still be wrong to do such a thing. When Bill arrives in the bar with the young man Harlan, Sookie is taken aback, thinking that Bill is trying to get a rise out of her. That they plan to drive to Monroe and visit with Malcolm concerns her, and she tries to warn Bill without the patrons becoming aware of her knowledge, but does not succeed.

The news that the home has been burned upsets Sookie greatly, and the sight of the four coffins in the yard is devastating. Sookie must wait until dark, hoping that Bill had not been in one of the coffins. Sam helps by keeping her occupied in the house until night falls.

Sookie is relieved when Bill crawls from the ground and is startled by his rough love making in reaction to Sookie's news. Afterward, Bill asks Sookie if she can hear Sam's thoughts and Sookie admits she can not. Bill encourages her to go to Sam if anything were to happen to him. Sookie is convinced that she and Bill will be able to have a relationship without danger, that she will persuade the people in Bon Temps to accept Bill.



Chapter Eight

Chapter Eight Summary

Sookie's life with Bill settles into a routine, with the two of them spending time together when the nights allow. Jason's troubles with the law continue, as he is repeatedly called into the police department to be questioned about the murders. When Sookie questions him about why the police are so interested, Jason admits that he had made video tapes while having sex with Maudette and Dawn, and the women had copies. His lawyer, Sid Matt Lancaster tells Jason to stop going to the police station without him present, and Sookie agrees. Jason asks Sookie to listen in on the thoughts of the patrons at the bar and try to find out who is the killer. Sookie explains that this is not as easy as it sounds but agrees to try.

The autopsy results from the murdered women are returned, the bites on them had been old, and they had not been missing any blood. Both women had sex before they were murdered, as well as after. The feelings in the town are still running high, the burning of the Monroe vampires still on everyone's minds.

Sookie becomes upset when Arlene is unwilling to let Sookie babysit if Bill is present. Angry, she takes it out on Bill, but is unable to tell him why she is angry, afraid of upsetting him. The two make love and Sookie calms, only to be upset again when Bill tells her that Eric has summoned them to Shreveport. Because Eric is older than Bill, he can not refuse him. Bill suggests that Sookie drink some of his blood in order to be stronger for the meeting with the other vampires the next night. Sookie agrees reluctantly, and bites Bill, surprised when the vampire becomes aroused and the two have sex.

Chapter Eight Analysis

Sookie is happy to be reunited with Bill, though they are both still uneasy about the deaths of the Monroe vampires. Bill worries that Sookie will be hurt if someone decides to come after him, and Sookie worries about Bill, who is so capable of taking care of himself at night but is so vulnerable during the day while he sleeps.

The problems that Jason faces are also a concern for Sookie, who is not only worried about her brother, but amazed at his stupidity. Jason has gotten himself into trouble and made it worse by videotaping his trysts with the women that had been murdered. Jason still does not seem to realize the issues he has created for himself by living the life he does.

Sookie is upset when Arlene questions Bill's presence if Sookie babysits her children. Sookie is offended that Arlene would think that she would ever allow her children to be harmed in any way, and is also offended for Bill who has done everything possible to prove that he can live among humans. Angry, Sookie goes home only to find out that



her fury has upset Bill. The vampire had been worried when Sookie had not come to his house as arranged. Bill convinces Sookie to make love, trying to calm her, but also it seems to prepare her for yet another blow. Eric, the more powerful vampire has demanded that Bill and Sookie return to Shreveport. Bill does not know what Eric wants but explains that if they do not go willingly, Eric will send other vampires to get them. Sookie realizes that they have no choice and agrees reluctantly. Bill wants her to drink his blood because it makes her stronger. Sookie is not willing at first, but agrees in the end. As she drinks Bill's blood, he becomes aroused and makes love to her again, and Sookie responds to him as well. It occurs to Sookie that her life had become anything but normal.



Chapter Nine

Chapter Nine Summary

Sookie and Bill return to Fangtasia to meet with Eric. They find Eric in a small room with a human named Bruce, the accountant for the bar who is obviously frightened. Eric wants Sookie to listen to Bruce's thoughts and find out if he is the person who has stolen sixty-thousand dollars from the club. Sookie agrees, but only if Eric promises to turn the guilty member over to the police. Eric is amused, but agrees with her demands.

Sookie listens to Bruce and tells Eric that the man is innocent. A waitress named Ginger is called in and Sookie is able to determine that the woman knows who the thief is but is unable to name the person, having been hypnotized. Ginger's best friend is brought into the office, and Sookie is able to determine that Longshadow, the bartender is the guilty party, seconds before he attacks her. The vampire bites Sookie on the arm and she tries to protect herself and struggles to free herself. Longshadow suddenly goes limp and begins to decay in front of her. Eric had staked the bartender. Covered in blood, Longshadow's and her own, Sookie is in a precarious position. The vampires have scented the blood and Eric is finding her more interesting than usual. Sookie tells Pam to call the girl Ginger back into the room and Eric snaps out of his trancelike state, and Sookie and Bill are able to leave. Bill is still interested, and Sookie allows him to kiss her before she is able to make him become aware of his actions as well. Sookie questions the reason behind Longshadow's theft and remarks that she had thought vampires were smarter than humans but supposed that was not always the case. Bill agrees, and takes Sookie home.

Chapter Nine Analysis

Sookie gets an idea of the lives that vampires lead when she and Bill return to Fangtasia. Someone has stolen from Eric and rather than torture the humans to find out who had done so, Eric had decided to see if Sookie could determine the truth. Sookie is a bit shaken up by the thought that the vampires would use torture to extract information, and agrees to help, providing that Eric turn the perpetrator over to the police. Reading Eric's thoughts Sookie knows that the vampire is amused by her, but agrees to her conditions.

Sookie's suggestion that the thief might be a vampire seems to intrigue Eric. The first person Sookie questions is innocent, but the second is unwilling to be touched. The girl Ginger seems to know something but is unable to allow thoughts to come to her head. Eric determines that she has been hypnotized. Ginger's friend is brought in, and Sookie is able to determine that Longshadow is guilty. The bartender tries to kill Sookie before she can say his name, but she is able to protect her throat from him long enough for Eric to stake him in the back, killing him. Sookie had swallowed some of the vampire's blood, and the others present can sense something different about her. Sookie gets



Pam to help by calling Ginger back in so that Eric can feed on the employee. Leaving before any harm can come to them, Sookie realizes that Bill is also excited by her condition and it takes her time to snap him out of it as well.



Chapter Ten

Chapter Ten Summary

Sookie realizes that the amount of vampire blood that she has ingested has changed her, making her stronger and more attractive. The thought of turning into a vampire by drinking their blood worries her. People at work are noticing the changes in her as well, and Sam seems particularly attracted to her. A moment between the two of them is interrupted by another waitress and Sookie is grateful.

Sookie spends the day listening into the thoughts of others. She does not learn anything new but is distressed to find out that her brother is most likely going to be arrested for the murders of Maudette and Dawn. Distressed, Sookie goes home and changes her clothes and returns to the bar to see if she can discover anything else.

Her brother Jason is there and the two sit at the bar, talking until Bill enters the bar with a human girl. A bit tipsy, Sookie is not sure how to react; she only knows that she is livid. Bill tells her that the fang banger was delivered to his doorstep by Eric as a reward for helping in Shreveport, and that he is sending her back. Jason offers to take the girl home, and Bill requests that Sookie meet with him so that they can talk. The two drive to the pond on the property of her parent's home where Jason lives.

The couple discusses their relationship again, and the power that Eric holds over them. Sookie is not comfortable around other vampires, and Bill does not see a way around running into them, especially since Sookie had promised to help the bar owner again. Bill thinks Pam might be able to keep Eric in line, but it will be difficult. The vampire has another idea, but will discuss it with Sookie the next night, when he has time to work things through. Though nothing has been decided, the two part company in better spirits than they had me, and Sookie drives home.

Cautiously exiting her car, Sookie rushes to her house and inside, closing the door behind her. As she begins to relax, something strikes her door, and she quickly calls Bill at his home for help. The vampire arrives within minutes and checks the yard, then approaches the house. The thump that Sookie had heard was the body of her cat striking the door. Someone had strangled the animal and tossed it onto the porch. Sookie is distraught, and Bill stays with her until he is forced to return home before dawn.

Chapter Ten Analysis

The difference in Sookie's appearance is evident to others, not only to herself. Her coworkers comment on her hair and complexion, as do the patrons that she listens to while trying to find the murderer. A brief encounter with Sam leaves Sookie unnerved, as she had sensed the attraction that her boss had for her, and surprises herself by feeling attracted to him as well.



The arrival of Bill with a fang banger is upsetting, and Jason keeps Sookie calm while Bill explains the situation. Jason willingly takes the girl home, proving that even though he is the center of a murder investigation he still thinks about sex more than anything else.

Eric's sending the woman to Bill is upsetting, not only because Eric thinks Bill might be unfaithful to Sookie, but because of the possibilities of him having tainted her blood to weaken Bill's will power. After discussing the situation again, Bill comes to a conclusion, though he does not share it with Sookie immediately. The two part in a better frame of mind than they had met, though Sookie still wonders if the relationship is ever going to be worth the problems that have come up almost daily.

At home Sookie is frightened by a noise outside and Bill comes to her aid. Sookie's cat has been killed, most likely to remind her that she is being watched by the killer. Bill comforts Sookie as best he can and stays with her as long as he can. The differences in their lives are evident again. They will never be able to share daylight together.



Chapter Eleven

Chapter Eleven Summary

Sookie goes to work the next day and her co-workers commiserate over the loss of her cat and are frightened for her. Arlene surprises Sookie by asking her to babysit for her children that night and Sookie agrees happily.

Rene drops the children off to Sookie's home and when Bill arrives they all have a great evening. As Rene and Arlene arrive to pick up the kids, a handsome vampire walks out of the woods and Sookie watches from a distance the amazed reactions of her friends. Bill signals Rene not to say anything to the other vampire and the couple leaves with Arlene's children.

As the other vampire approaches, Sookie is stunned to realize she is looking at Elvis. Bill explains that she should not ever call the vampire anything but Bubba. When the man had been brought to the morgue, an attendant had been a big fan and had tried to make him one of the undead. Something had gone wrong, and Bubba was now not very smart, so the other vampires hire him to do odd jobs for them. Bill also cautions Sookie that Bubba likes pets...for dinner. Sookie greets the vampire and discovers that though he is obviously not very smart, he is very pleasant. Bill explains that he must leave town for a while, but Bubba will stay outside her house in the woods, keeping an eye on Sookie at night. Unhappily, Sookie watches as Bill leaves for New Orleans.

Working the next day and then returning home that evening, Sookie receives a phone call from Terry Bellefleur telling her that Jason is at the bar and wants to see her. Sookie reluctantly returns to Merlotte's only to find that Jason is not there after all. Sookie thinks Terry is just having a bad night and leaves. A collie is outside the bar and greets Sookie happily. Sookie is lonely and talks to the dog, asking if it would like to come home with her. The dog responds as if it can understand her perfectly and hops in Sookie's car for the ride to her house.

Arriving home, Sookie is careful to get the dog in the house without Bubba deciding he needs a snack, and the two settle in for the night. Waking the next morning, Sookie is stunned to find Sam in her bed. Surprise does not come close to explaining her feelings as Sam explains that he is a shapeshifter, able to change into whatever animal he has last seen. Sookie realizes that Sam's condition can not be explained by a virus. Sookie vomits, realizing that Bill is not infected by a virus either. Her lover is really dead.

Sookie and Sam get ready to leave when Andy Bellefleur arrives. Sam turns back into a dog and Sookie greets the detective. Andy had come looking for Jason or information on Bill. Another woman has been murdered. Sookie tells Andy that Bill is out of town and she has not seen her brother. Andy is tired, and Sookie suggests that he sleep in her spare room, worried that he is unsafe to drive. Andy reluctantly agrees and once he is asleep Sookie orders Sam to change and drives him to Merlotte's.



At the bar, Sookie sees her brother's truck and Jason slumped behind the wheel. Jason is covered in blood. Sookie calls Sam for help and Jason is transported to the hospital where the doctor tells Sookie that her brother is sleeping off the effects of drugs and alcohol. Sookie does not believe this, as she knows that Jason would never do drugs. When Sookie returns to her house she finds the detective is gone, learning later that he had been summoned to the hospital and had waited for Sookie to leave before arresting Jason for murder.

Chapter Eleven Analysis

Sookie returns to work the next day as her life seems to continue to spiral out of control. Pleased that Arlene is willing to let her watch the children even with Bill around is uplifting and her spirits improve. The couple has a wonderful time with the kids but the evening ends strangely when another vampire arrives called by Bill to protect Sookie while he is away. The other vampire is Elvis, who had lost quite a bit of his mental capacity when he had been turned into a vampire. Sookie is sad that Bill is leaving and a bit unsure of having the bodyguard, known as Bubba to watch over her.

The following evening Sam's strange behavior is explained when Sookie discovers that the dog she brought home from work is actually her boss, a shapeshifter. Stunned by the revelation, Sookie is angry as well, wondering why Sam had waited until Bill had arrived before revealing his secret to her. Sam assures her that he is not trying to steal her away from Bill, though he would not be adverse to it but is more concerned with protecting her until the murderer is caught.

The arrival of Andy Bellefleur with the announcement of another murder upsets Sookie again, as she does not know where her brother is and Bill is still out of town. When Sookie and Sam find Jason in his truck covered in blood, Sookie panics and calls for help, unaware that the blood is not his brother's and that she has just put him in a position to be charged with murder.



Chapter Twelve

Chapter Twelve Summary

Sookie meets with Sid Matt Lancaster, Jason's lawyer, and discusses her brother's case. It seems that Jason had been covered in the victim's blood with a video tape of the two having sex. Jason had admitted that he had sex with the girl but does not remember anything after that point. Sookie thinks her brother has been set up and Sid Matt agrees that it might be possible. They discuss bail, and Sookie goes home, knowing that there is nothing else she can do at this point.

Bubba greets her as she arrives and Sookie says goodnight and goes inside, fixing herself a snack and settling in, wishing Bill would call. A noise outside disturbs her, and Bubba appears on the porch. There had been an intruder, and the vampire had frightened him off.

Jason makes bail the following day and Sookie meets with him briefly, assuring him that she knows he is not guilty. She then spends the day at Merlotte's trying to determine if there is anyone there who knows anything about the murders. Sam finally sends her home, telling her she is upsetting the customers. With a brief stop at the store, Sookie returns home and gets ready for bed.

Aware that something is wrong, Sookie calls for Bubba and gets no response. She tries to call the police and is stunned to find that the phone lines have been cut. Sookie goes to the closet to retrieve the shotgun that is kept there to find that it is missing. It occurs to her that the murderer had been in her house at some point, and was obviously someone she knows. Deciding that it would be better to get out of the house and make for the safety of the woods, Sookie scurries away toward the line of trees.

Sookie senses movement and sees the form of a man with a length of rope in his hands. She stumbles across a sleeping Bubba with a dead cat beside him. It is clear that someone had planted a drugged cat in order to incapacitate the vampire. Sookie continues through the woods and uses her ability to read the mind of the man that is trying to catch her. In shock, Sookie realizes that she is reading the twisted mind of Rene Lenier, the man who had killed the women and her grandmother.

Rene spots her and a chase ensues with Rene catching Sookie and beating her. She struggles and is able to free the knife Rene carried on his belt and stab him with it. Leaving Rene on the ground, Sookie makes her way to Bill's house where she uses the phone to call for help and passes out.

Waking in the hospital, Sookie learns that Rene had been killing women that had relationships with vampires because his own sister had been involved with one. Rene had killed Cindy, furious and had reconciled her death, allowing himself to believe that



he had saved her from herself. There are unsolved murders in Shreveport as well, and the police think Rene may be responsible for them as well.

Bill returns that evening, and Sookie is happy to see him. Bill wants Sookie to drink his blood and heal faster, but she is unwilling, wanting to heal on her own. Bill tells Sookie that he had been in New Orleans in order to obtain an official position in the vampire culture and had succeeded. It would be more difficult for Eric to bother them from this point on. Bill is anxious for life to return to normal, but Sookie is not sure that life will ever be normal again.

Chapter Twelve Analysis

The arrest of her brother is upsetting for Sookie, especially when she learns that Jason had not stopped making video tapes of his trysts with women. His lawyer agrees with Sookie that there is something odd about the way Jason had been arrested and agrees to look into it. Sookie calls Bill, upset that she can not reach him during the day, another reminder that they are never going to have a normal relationship.

The novel reaches its climax when Sookie realizes that Rene Lenier is the murderer and is crazy. Rene had killed the women that had associated with vampires believing that he was doing the right thing, Sookie's grandmother had been killed simply because she was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Angered by this knowledge, Sookie is able to summon the strength to fight back, finally stabbing Rene with his own knife and leaving him for dead. Rene does not die, and the police arrest him. Rene confesses everything, more angry that Sookie had been able to escape than being captured at long last.

Bill's return pleases Sookie, though she must remind him that he shouldn't kill Rene. The police must be allowed to do their job. Bill is pleased that he has found a solution to the problem they are having with Eric and relieved that they can get back to a normal life once again. Sookie knows their life is not normal and doubts that it ever will be, though she loves Bill, and is willing to try.



Characters

Sookie Stackhouse

Sookie Stackhouse is an attractive twenty-five-year old waitress in Bon Temps, Louisiana. Sookie is different from other people because she is a telepath, able to read the minds of those around her. Because of the concentration it takes to block people's thoughts, many believe Sookie is a little crazy. Sookie is looking for excitement in her life and finds it when a vampire enters Merlotte's, the bar where she works. Sookie is drawn to the man and very attracted to him as well. Events arise that bring the two closer together, and Sookie winds up in a relationship with the vampire, Bill Compton.

Sookie's life is thrown into turmoil, not only because she is dating a vampire, but because women are getting murdered in her town, and her lover and her brother are both suspects. Sookie investigates a bit on her own, listening to the thoughts of the patrons in the bar, trying to gather clues that would exonerate both of the men in her life. Tangled up in the investigation as well as with other vampires in the area, Sookie is unsure of where her life is headed, or if she is willing to put the effort in to make her relationship with Bill work. Though she loves him, there are always going to be problems that must be overcome, and they sometimes seem insurmountable.

Bill Compton

A vampire that had grown up in Bon Temps in the 1800's, Bill Compton returns to the area when the last surviving Compton passes away, and the property reverts to him. Having spent many years on the road or in hiding, Bill wishes to settle down into one place. Taking advantage of the fact that vampires are now legally recognized as citizens, Bill decides to stay in Bon Temps, and his attraction to Sookie is an added bonus.

Enthralled by the differences that Sookie exhibits from other people, Bill is willing to do what he must in order to maintain a relationship with her. The couple have some difficulties; though Bill is trying to mainstream with humans, other vampires that know him visit often and try to make his life difficult. Eric, yet another vampire, is attracted to Sookie as well and Bill is forced to become more official in the community of vampires in order to protect the woman he loves.

Though popular thought is that vampires simply suffer from a virus that makes them appear dead, Bill is not alive, and barely considers himself human any longer, though he does try in order to please Sookie.



Sam Merlotte

Sookie's boss, and the owner of Merlotte's, Sam is attracted to Sookie, though he has never made any advances toward her. Bill's arrival prompts Sam to feel jealous, and in time he reveals his own "disability" to Sookie. Sam is a shapeshifter, able to change into whatever animal he had seen last. Sam had not felt comfortable telling Sookie the truth about himself, until he sees how well she handles Bill's condition. Sam is attracted to Sookie, but also cares for her as a friend. The situation that Sookie finds herself in would not be as easy to get through if she did not have Sam as a friend.

Rene Lenier

Rene is the ex-husband of Arlene, one of the waitresses in Merlotte's and a frequent visitor to the bar. Rene seems to turn up everywhere, and everyone in town knows him. Though Rene seems to be a stand up type of guy, it turns out that he is the murderer in Bon Temps.

Rene has been killing women that associated with vampires, reminded of his sister who had dated a vampire as well. Rene had killed her when she refused to leave her lover, and felt justified killing other women like her.

Jason Stackhouse

Sookie's brother, Jason is an attractive man who is never short of company. The company he keeps gets him in trouble when two of his former girlfriends are found dead, and Jason is suspected of murder.

Arlene

A waitress at Merlotte's and former wife of Rene Lenier, Arlene is unaware that her ex is the killer until he nearly kills Sookie.

Adele Hale Stackhouse

Sookie's grandmother, Adele raised Sookie and her brother since they were young and their parents were killed in a flash flood. Adele is killed by Rene when he arrives at the house hoping to find Sookie, and surprising Gran instead.

Eric

A powerful vampire, Eric is attracted to Sookie and fascinated by her ability to read minds. Eric uses Sookie to solve a small mystery at his bar, Fangtasia.



Mack Rattray

An ex-con, Mack attempts to drain Bill, prompting Sookie to come to the vampire's aid.

Denise Rattray

Married to Mack, Denise had also been attempting to drain Bill, in order to sell his blood on the black market.

Bubba

A vampire, Bubba is actually Elvis, but has lost most of his mental abilities when he had been made a vampire.

Mike Spencer

The funeral director of Spencer and Sons Funeral Home and the medical examiner for Bon Temps.

Sheriff Bud Dearborn

The sheriff in Bon Temps, Sookie encounters Dearborn at the site of the Rattray's trailer after it was destroyed by Bill to cover up the death of the couple.

Diane

A female vampire, who travels with Malcolm, another vampire. Diane is beautiful, and Sookie first believed that she might be Bill's lover.

Malcolm

A male vampire, as cruel as Bill tries to not to be.

Liam.

A tattooed male vampire who travels with Malcolm and Diane.

Jerry

A young Hispanic man who is with Malcolm. Jerry carries the Sino-Aids virus, which can leave a vampire weak and vulnerable. Jerry spends his time with vampires trying to



infect as many as possible for revenge. His former lover had infected him with the virus, and had then left him for a vampire. Sookie reads his thoughts and warns Bill not to drink his blood, alerting Diane, Malcolm and Liam to her ability as a telepath.

Maudette Pickens

A cashier at the local mini-mart, Maudette is murdered in her apartment. A fang-banger, or someone who likes to be bitten by vampires, Maudette was strangled. Maudette had also dated Sookie's brother Jason occasionally.

Dawn Green

A waitress at Merlotte's, Dawn is the second murder victim in Bon Temps, with ties to vampires as well as Jason Stackhouse.

JB du Rone

A former boyfriend of Sookie's, JB lives next door to the second victim, Dawn Green.

Kevin Prior

A police officer in Bon Temps who responds to the call when Sookie finds Dawn murdered.

Kenya Jones

The second police officer who responds to the call when Dawn is found murdered. Kenya is Kevin Prior's partner.

Pam

A vampire who is partners with Eric.

Longshadow

The bartender at Fangtasia, Longshadow is discovered stealing from Eric when Sookie is called in to read the minds of the employees.



Detective Andy Bellefleur

A detective in Bon Temps, Bellefleur is investigating the murders. Bellefleur discovers that the rumors about Sookie being a telepath are true, and he begins thinking provocative thoughts in her presence to get a reaction from her.

Terry Bellefleur

Andy's second cousin, Terry is the part time bartender at Merlotte's when Sam is busy.

Layfayette Reynold

The cook at Merlotte's, Layfayette is a bit effeminate, wearing more make-up than most women.

Sam Norris

A long time friend of Gran, and the mayor of Bon Temps.



Objects/Places

Bon Temps, Louisiana

The town in Louisiana where Sookie Stackhouse lives located in Renard Parish, Louisiana.

Merlotte's

The bar, owned by Sam Merlotte, where Sookie Stackhouse works.

Four Tracks Corner

The intersection in Bon Temps where Mack and Denise Rattray live in a trailer. After the Rattray's attack Sookie, Bill kills them, and destroys their trailer and the property to simulate a tornado.

Fangtasia

A vampire bar in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Monroe

Another town in Louisiana, Monroe is where Malcolm, Diane and Liam nest.

Blood in the Quarter

A hotel that caters to vampires in New Orleans.

New Orleans

A major city in Louisiana, and the capitol as far as vampires are concerned.

The Descendants of the Glorious Dead

The group of people that meet with Bill to discuss the civil war.



Shreveport

Another town in Louisiana near Bon Temps. The location of the bar Fangtasia.

The Compton House

The home that Bill inherits after his last relative dies.



Themes

Sex

Sex is an important factor in *Dead Until Dark*, by Charlaine Harris. Women are being murdered due to the relationships that they have had with vampires. The murderer, Rene Lenier, targets women that remind him of his sister, Cindy. Rene tried to talk sense into his sister when he had discovered she was dating a vampire and that she had allowed the vampire to bite her and drink her blood. Rene becomes enraged and goes mad, killing his sister.

In *Bon Temps*, more women are being murdered, specifically women that have had sex with vampires, and allowed them to drink their blood.

Sookie's brother, Jason, is a suspect in the murders because he has had sex with all the victims. Jason is promiscuous, and his sister has warned him that his life will get him in trouble eventually. Jason enjoys sex and had not thought that anyone could get hurt just having fun. Jason is the one who is hurt however. Having videotaped his trysts with the women involved, Jason unwittingly puts himself at the center of the murder investigation.

Finally, the sex life of Sookie herself is central to *Dead Until Dark*. Sookie is a virgin, never having been able to have a normal relationship due to her telepathy. Sookie has sex for the first time with Bill, and because he is her first, their relationship grows stronger.

Love

Love plays a role in *Dead Until Dark*. Sookie Stackhouse never believed she would experience love because of her ability to read the minds of others. The waitress has had relationships in the past, but they were unable to develop past a certain stage because the thoughts of her partner would intrude on her. In order not to hear the thoughts of others, Sookie had to concentrate almost constantly on keeping her mind closed to them.

Bill Compton arrives in *Bon Temps*, and things change for Sookie almost at once. The most significant factor is that Bill's thoughts are his own; no matter how hard she tries, Sookie can not hear Bill's thoughts. Because Sookie can relax around Bill, she is able to be herself completely. Not having to work at keeping someone's thoughts away, Sookie does not have to worry about keeping Bill away either. She quickly falls in love with him, though at times she is unsure if she loves him or the fact that she can not hear him. Through time, the relationship deepens, and Sookie knows she loves Bill, and he loves her, despite their obvious differences. The couple are committed to trying to make their love last, and their relationship a strong one.



Reality

Though the novel *Dead Until Dark* is fiction and the subject matter is vampires, reality plays a part in the novel. Sookie is faced with the reality that her ability to read minds is a barrier in her ability to share a close relationship with a man. It is not until she meets Bill and realizes she can not hear his thoughts that the internal battle she had been fighting for so long could be relaxed.

Another reality Sookie faces is the difficulty of her relationship with Bill. They are very different people and others look down on a human becoming involved with a vampire. There is prejudice even though vampires had been legally recognized several years before. No matter how much Sookie wants things with Bill to work out, there will always be obstacles in their way, things beyond what a normal couple faces.



Style

Point of View

Dead Until Dark, by Charlaine Harris is written in the first person, with Sookie Stackhouse, the main character, as the narrator. Though this point of view usually lets the reader know only what the main character is thinking, Sookie is a telepath, able to read the minds of those around her. Because of this, the reader still has insight into what other characters in the novel are thinking, though their feelings are filtered through Sookie and her interpretation.

There are equal parts dialogue and descriptive passages throughout the story, though sometimes the dialogue is an internal conversation that the main character is having with herself. Other times it is simply the thoughts of other characters to whom Sookie is reacting. The descriptive passages are most often used to clarify the feelings of the main character, or to provide some back story for a character or situation.

Setting

Dead Until Dark is set in the small town of Bon Temps, Louisiana. Sookie Stackhouse has grown up in Bon Temps and lived there her entire life, first with her parents and brother, and later with her grandmother, after her parents are killed. Within Bon Temps, different settings are visited in the novel, such as Merlotte's, the bar where Sookie works, and the Compton House. The Compton House is where Bill the vampire decides to live in Bon Temps, when he decides that he would like to settle down and create some roots for himself.

In Shreveport, Louisiana, the vampire bar, Fangtasia is visited by Sookie and Bill. Fangtasia is owned by another vampire, Eric, and is the exact opposite of the neighborhood bar in which Sookie works.

Several other towns in the area are mentioned, significantly Monroe, the scene of a vampire slaying. Though Sookie does not often venture outside of Bon Temps, she does travel to Monroe, afraid Bill may have been injured. Bill also travels to New Orleans, which the reader understands is very popular with vampires. The settings in the novel are described minimally, with the author giving more details about the characters, rather than the places around them.

Language and Meaning

The language in the novel is for the most part modern and to some extent regional, depicting the characters as small-town, southern people. The exception is the vampires, who while also southern in style speak in a more formal manner. This gives the reader a sense of their age, or rather how long they have been vampires.



The language used also gives the reader some insight into the background and education of those in *Dead Until Dark*. Though the characters are not meant to come across as uneducated or simple, the author is able to convey the difference between people, and clearly express them to the reader, without having to outline the entire life story of those involved.

Structure

Dead Until Dark by Charlaine Harris is divided into twelve chapters. The chapters are numbered and have no title. The chapters vary in length, but tend to be on the long side, some up to thirty pages in length. Each chapter has at least one significant event take place, sometimes more, and the chapters lead the reader through the novel. There is quite a bit of dialogue in the novel, though at times it is an internal dialogue by the main character, Sookie Stackhouse.

There are several plots within the novel, the main one being the relationship between Sookie Stackhouse and the vampire, Bill Compton. The reader is led through their relationship from the beginning and allowed to see the struggles they face along the way. Subplots include women being murdered in Bon Temps, murders in which both Bill and Sookie's brother are suspect, and Sookie's ability to read the minds of those around her. Sookie had always thought of being a telepath as having a disability, but as she grows within the novel, she begins to think otherwise.

The novel is fast paced, though at some times can be hard to follow, as the main character's thoughts are sometimes unclear. As the reader is seeing things from Sookie's point of view, it takes a bit of adjustment. Once the reader is used to the thoughts and quick changes in them of the main character, the book is enjoyable and easy to read.



Quotes

"She must worry about you being out so late at night by yourself,' Bill observed. He sounded disapproving. Maybe he was thinking of Maudette? I had moment of deep unease, wondering if in fact Bill had known her, if she'd invited him to come home with her. But I rejected the idea because I was stubbornly unwilling to dwell on the odd, awful, nature of Maudette's life and death; I didn't want that horror to cast a shadow on my little bit of happiness.

'It's part of my job,' I said tartly. 'Can't be helped. I don't work nights all the time, anyway. But when I can, I do.'

'Why?' The vampire gave me a shove up to my feet, and then rose easily from the ground.

'Better tips. Harder work. No time to think.'

'But night is more dangerous,' he said disapprovingly.

He ought to know. 'Now don't you go sounding like my grandmother,' I chided him mildly. We had almost reached the parking lot.

'I'm older than your grandmother,' he reminded me. That brought the conversation up short. "

Chapter One, pg. 35

"Gran, we're talking about a guy who sleeps in the ground all day,' I reminded her. 'I don't think he'd ever look at the rug.'"

Chapter 2, pg. 38

"Well,' I began, not sure if I needed help or not, or if I did that Rene could supply it.

'Have you seen Dawn? She didn't come to work today, and she never called in yesterday. Sam asked me to stop by.'

'Sam should come do his own dirty work.' Rene said, which perversely made me defend my boss."

Chapter 3, pg. 76

"I am so not-perfect that despite the deaths of two women I knew, I spent a substantial amount of time wondering what Bill meant about doing him proud. I had no idea what constituted appropriate dress or visiting a vampire bar. I wasn't about to dress in some stupid costume, as I'd heard some bar visitors did."

Chapter 4, pg 97

"Has he been saying ugly things to you?' Sam asked sharply. He was right on my heels.

'He's been thinking them,' I said helplessly, 'to get a rise out of me. He knows.'

'Son of a bitch,' Sam said, which almost shocked me back to normal. Sam didn't curse."

Chapter 5, pg 117

"Not that I'd ever had many sleepovers, or been to many. Nope, nope, nope. I wasn't going to fall into that old pit. I was what I was, and I had a life, and I could enjoy things; the little treats that kept me going."

Chapter 6, pg 139



"How was the murder of Uncle Bartlett different? He'd harmed me, too, dreadfully, made my already difficult childhood a true nightmare. Hadn't I been relieved, even pleased, to hear he'd been found dead? Didn't my horror at Bill's intervention reek of hypocrisy of the worst sort?"

Chapter 7, pg. 165

"'Sookie,' she began helplessly, 'honey, I love you. But you can't understand, you're not a mother. I can't leave my kids with a vampire. I just can't.'"

Chapter 8, pg. 189

"Eric actually seemed to be thinking that over. And suddenly, I was in his thoughts. He was thinking he could make me do what he wanted, anywhere, anytime, just by threatening Bill or some human I loved. But he wanted to mainstream, to keep as legal as he could, to keep his relations with humans aboveboard, or at least as aboveboard as vampire-human dealings could be. He didn't want to kill anyone he didn't have to. "

Chapter 9, pg 202

"I felt friendless. There was no one I could talk to about Bill, no one who wouldn't be halfway shocked I was seeing him in the first place. How could I tell Arlene I was blue because Bill's vampire buddies were terrifying and ruthless, that one of them had bitten me the night before, bled into my mouth, been staked on top of me? This was not the kind of problem Arlene was equipped to handle."

Chapter 10, pg 217

"A handsome vampire with thick black hair combed into an improbable wavy style strolled up out of the woods as Arlene was bundling the kids into the truck, and Rene and Bill were chatting. Bill waved a casual hand at the vampire, and he raised on in return, joining Bill and Rene as if he'd been expected.

From the porch swing, I watched Bill introduce the two, and the vampire and Rene shook hands. Rene was gaping at the newcomer, and I could tell he felt he'd recognized him. Bill looked meaningfully at Rene and shook his head, and Rene's mouth closed on whatever comment he'd been going to make."

Chapter 11, pg 236

"I was paralyzed by the shock of it, the horror of it. Whose thoughts were these? I had an image of Arlene's kids, playing on my living room floor; I saw myself, and I didn't look like the person I saw in my own mirror. I had huge holes in my neck, and I was lewd; I had a knowing leer on my face, and patted the inside of my thigh suggestively.

I was in the mind of Rene Lenier. This was how Rene saw me. "

Chapter 12, pg 275



Topics for Discussion

What ability does Sookie have? Why does she consider it a disability?

How does Sookie meet Bill Compton? Why does Bill believe he is in Sookie's debt?

What secret does Sam have? Why does he finally reveal it to Sookie?

What does Eric want Sookie to do for him? What bargain does Sookie make with the vampire?

What happens to Sookie's grandmother?

Why is Sookie's brother a suspect in the murders? Why is Bill a suspect?

What is the reason behind the murders? How does the killer rationalize the deaths?